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Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience

CLAUDIA RAPP

Hagiography, it may be argued, in terms of its mass appeal, educational purpose, entertainment value and—not to forget—general availability, was the television of the Middle Ages. This is the reason why hagiographical literature offers to the modern student immediate and direct access to the historical circumstances and the mentality of a people, a time, or a region. Or so we like to think.

But, in fact, there is a tantalizing, not to say frustrating, discrepancy between the hundreds of hagiographical texts that survive in equally numerous manuscripts from the Byzantine Empire, and our knowledge of how these texts were used, and by whom. Even more difficult is the question of whether and how the intended use of hagiographical texts is reflected in their actual presentation. Lack of evidence is the main obstacle, but with the awareness of the existence of six late Byzantine manuscripts containing exclusively the Lives of holy women (and a seventh codex of related content), this question of the relation between text and audience or between book and audience acquires particular relevance. It is this group of manuscripts that forms the basis of this study.

The first part of this article presents the manuscripts and discusses the origin of the collections they contain and their intended use. It will be shown that female subject matter in the manuscripts did not necessarily presuppose an audience of women. The second part seeks further to explore this latter point through a study of the saints' Lives contained in these manuscripts and related materials, in order to demonstrate that while women saints were of interest to both men and women, they were often assigned a particularly prominent role in texts by male authors addressing a primarily female audience. This assumed preference, however, is not borne out when women authors or patronesses were able to exercise their own choice of hagiographical subject matter.

These observations, it must be said, are not written in stone. They are tentative and preliminary because they are based on a limited amount of evidence that can only illuminate certain moments in the long history of Byzantium. From a distance, we have the impression of a continual stream of light, but upon closer scrutiny it may well be found that we have overlooked many dim areas in between. The fact that our evidence is so

I would like to thank Claudia Ludwig and Alice-Mary Talbot for reading a first draft of this article, and the latter, especially, for generously sharing her knowledge on monasticism and the religious life of women in Byzantium. I am also grateful to Henry Maguire and the referees for the *DOP* for their valuable comments.

scattered over time makes it difficult to measure accurately the historical adjustment and change in the role of women in Byzantine society and its reflection in hagiography.

SAINTS' LIVES AND THEIR USE

Our knowledge about the concrete circumstances in which hagiographical literature was enjoyed by the men and women of Byzantium is rather limited. This is probably due to the neglect of our sources to state the obvious and, thus, further confirms the extent to which the cult of saints was an integral part of the life of Byzantium. We know that saints' Lives were read aloud and listened to, that they were especially popular at the shrines of the saints,¹ that hagiographical reading material was available in monastic churches,² and that aspiring saints were influenced by the stories of earlier saints and martyrs.³ As children, many future saints showed a prodigious affinity for hagiographical writing.⁴ Especially in the education of girls, it seems that such texts were considered the instructional material of choice. The education arranged by the father of Elisabeth of Heracleia for her—she would become a miracle-working abbess in fifth-century Constantinople—provided Elisabeth with a deep familiarity with the Lives of saints.⁵ Irene of Chrysobalanton, another future abbess in the capital in the tenth century, is also said to have applied herself in her youth with great zeal to reading the Lives of the fathers.⁶

Most commonly, saints' Lives were available in the form of collections, and this is the form in which they are preserved in manuscripts to the present day. The compilation of such hagiographical collections, usually arranged by month (in the order of the calendar), and hence called *menologia*, can be traced to the eighth century, if not earlier.⁷ The great watershed in the history of Byzantine hagiography was the period of cultural revival associated with Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos and the ruling Macedonian

¹The Acts of the martyr Thecla were available for the interested pilgrim to read at her shrine in Seleucia, according to the 4th-century travel account of the Roman noblewoman Egeria: *Égérie, Journal de voyage*, SC 296, ed. and trans. P. Maraval (Paris, 1982), 23.5, p. 230, line 26. Many of the *vitae* discussed in this article are now available in English in *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, D.C., 1996).

²The *Vita Antonii*, for example, was laid out for the private reading of visitors to the community of monks outside of Milan at the time of Ambrose: Augustine, *Confessiones* VIII, 6.15, CCSL 27, ed. L. Verheijen (Turnhout, 1981). The books that were available for private reading in the church of the monastery that Daniel the Stylite entered in the mid-5th century as a boy probably also included hagiographical texts: *Vita Danielis Stylitae*, chap. 3, in H. Delehay, *Les saints stylites*, SubsHag 14 (Brussels, 1923), 4.

³In Palestine in the 620s, Anastasius the Persian martyr was inspired by his reading of the Lives of the saints with the burning desire to emulate their faith and to seek martyrdom at the hand of the Persians: *Acta Anastasii Persae*, chap. 9, in B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*, I: *Les textes* (Paris, 1992), p. 51, lines 4–8.

⁴In the late 9th century, Theodore the Studite, as a boy, had the miraculous ability to absorb by memory the Lives of the fathers: *vita* of Theodore the Studite, PG 99, col. 237B–C. A few decades later, Stephen the Younger displayed the same eagerness to know the Lives of the saints by heart as they were read out in church: *vita* of Stephen the Younger, PG 100, col. 1081C.

⁵F. Halkin, "Sainte Élisabeth d'Héraclée, abbesse à Constantinople," *AB* 91 (1973), 256.

⁶*The Life of St Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton*, ed. and trans. J. O. Rosenqvist (Uppsala, 1986), p. 16, lines 17–18 (henceforth cited as Rosenqvist).

⁷A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche, Texte und Untersuchungen* 50–52, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1937–52), I, 19–25 and 91–123 (henceforth cited as Ehrhard).

dynasty. Symeon the Logothete, a high-ranking court official in the second half of the tenth century and author of a chronicle, received an imperial commission to gather, sift, and stylistically revise the saints' Lives in circulation at that time. The resulting collection of 148 *vitae*, arranged in ten volumes in the order of the liturgical year, starting with 1 September, not only garnered for Symeon the epithet "Metaphrastes" (the translator), it also became the standard *menologium* throughout the Byzantine Empire.⁸ Still, hagiographical works continued to be composed in subsequent centuries, both in the form of new versions of Lives of older saints or *vitae* of new saints, and these texts also made their way into the manuscript collections.

The *menologia* were mostly kept in monastic libraries. That much is clear from the numerous surviving manuscripts of this kind, and we can make an informed guess about their use both by the community and by individuals. Hagiographical texts obviously formed part of the liturgy on the feast of the saint. They were probably also the subject of another form of communal reading to which nuns were exposed as much as monks. The *typika*, or foundation charters, of two convents in Constantinople in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Lips and Bebaia Elpis, explicitly prescribe that edifying works be read aloud during mealtime, the latter adding by way of explanation that at the same time as the body is replenished with food, listening to "holy books" also offers nourishment for the soul.⁹ Similarly, private reading was recommended to the nuns as a way to spend their spare time.¹⁰ Saints' Lives, of course, would lend themselves very well to both public recital and private perusal, and this is reflected in the occasional reference to the "readers and listeners" of a *vita*.¹¹ The popularity that hagiographical literature must have enjoyed in Byzantine convents is confirmed by some concrete examples: Already in the seventh century, the Constantinopolitan abbess Sergia reminds her community of the great spiritual benefit they have derived from the reading of hagiographical works.¹² The abbess of Bebaia Elpis is urged to read attentively the Lives of "our most blessed and holy mothers" and to model herself after them in order that she in turn can be an example to her nuns.¹³ The spiritual advice addressed by Theoleptos of Philadelphia to Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, the abbess of the nunnery of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople in the early fourteenth century, takes for granted

⁸M. H. Congourdeau, "Syméon Métaphraste," *DSP* 14:1383–87.

⁹*Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis, in H. Delehay, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), p. 67, lines 14–25; *typikon* of Lips, *ibid.*, p. 122, lines 12–13, where the reading material is unspecified. But since it is the duty of the *ekklesiarchissa*, the supervisor of the church, to appoint the reader for this recital, we can safely assume that it was of suitably edifying content and probably included hagiographical works. Edifying reading at mealtime is also attested for the early 14th century in the Constantinopolitan convent of Philanthropos Soter: Theoleptos of Philadelphia, *The Monastic Discourses*, ed., trans., and comm. R. E. Sinkewicz (Toronto, 1992), p. 106, lines 365–66.

¹⁰Already the 4th-century author Evagrius Pontikos in his "Advice to a Virgin" (Παραίνεσις πρὸς παρθένον) recommends that private reading be part of a nun's daily routine: H. Gressman, *Nonnenspiegel und Mönchsspiegel des Euagrius Pontikos*, Texte und Untersuchungen 39.4 (Leipzig, 1913), p. 146, line 4.

¹¹See, for example, the *vita* of Olympias, who was a generous supporter of John Chrysostom: "Vie d'Olympias," in *Lettres à Olympias*, SC 13 bis, ed. A.-M. Malingrey (Paris, 1968), chap. 17, p. 444, line 7, and p. 446, lines 34–39; chap. 18, p. 446, line 1–p. 448, line 7. Also the Life of Symeon the Fool, in *Das Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, ed. L. Rydén (Stockholm-Uppsala, 1963), p. 122, lines 25–27.

¹²"Narratio Sergiae de translatione sanctae Olympiadis," *AB* 16 (1897), p. 48, lines 11–15.

¹³Delehay, *Deux typica*, p. 35, line 29–p. 36, line 11.

that her private reading will include the Lives of saints.¹⁴ Byzantine nuns were thus a recognizable and recognized group among the consumers of hagiographical writing.

This last statement has two implications. First, it presupposes the availability of at least a few suitable books in the convent library. That convents were thus equipped is also confirmed elsewhere. One *typikon* notes that the authority of the *ekklesiarchissa* also extended over the book collection of the convent.¹⁵ The founder of a convent in Baionia (Crete) in the year 1400 prohibited that any of the books with which he had outfitted his foundation be lent out, since there would be no one to replace them. His charter also made it a rule that if a nun brought a book with her as her private possession, the volume would upon her death become the property of the convent rather than being returned to her family.¹⁶ Although the overwhelming majority of surviving manuscripts that can be firmly associated with convent libraries are scriptural or liturgical in content, the examples given above clearly indicate that nuns had access to hagiographical reading material.¹⁷

The second implication of nuns being consumers of hagiographical material concerns the level of literacy among Byzantine nuns. Byzantine convents, at least those that were aristocratic foundations, perpetuated the social distinctions of the outside world. The nuns were divided into "church" or choir nuns (*ekklesiastikai*) and "laboring" nuns (*diakonikai*).¹⁸ The former came from an aristocratic background and continued to enjoy their privileged lifestyles; they were dedicated to a life of prayer, psalmody, and contemplation, and in order to discharge these duties they must have attained a certain degree of education before taking the veil. The "laboring" nuns, by contrast, were primarily engaged in manual labor. In one convent, these illiterate nuns were supposed to receive instruction from their more privileged sisters because "it is a good thing,"¹⁹ but most convents refused to take any responsibility for the education of their members or of girls from the outside, unless in preparation for their future lives as nuns.²⁰

¹⁴Theoleptos of Philadelphia, *Monastic Discourses*, p. 104, lines 328–30.

¹⁵*Typikon* of Lips in Delehay, *Deux typica*, p. 118, line 31–p. 119, line 1.

¹⁶S. Petrides, "Le typikon de Nil Damilas pour le monastère de femmes de Baionia en Crète (1400)," *IRAIK* 15 (1911), p. 109, lines 17–21. A catalogue of his book collection, which he presumably donated to this foundation, is preserved in cod. Bar. 59, fols. 226v–227v: S. Lambros, "Das Testament des Neilos Damilas," *BZ* 4 (1895), 585–87.

¹⁷A.-M. Talbot, "Bluestocking Nuns: Intellectual Life in the Convents of Late Byzantium," *HU&S* 7 (1983), 609–14, for convent libraries. They mostly contain the Holy Scriptures and treatises on the monastic life. The group of fifteen lavishly illuminated manuscripts from the Palaiologan period, which were probably produced through the patronage and under the close supervision of a "Palaiologina," are all scriptural or liturgical in nature: H. Buchthal and H. Belting, *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy* (Washington, D.C., 1978). The authors submit that this patroness should be identified with the niece of Michael VIII, Theodora Raoulaina. Recently, however, it has been suggested that this "Palaiologina" should be identified with a woman of even higher rank, namely the empress Theodora Palaiologina, wife of Michael VIII. This conclusion was reached independently by R. Nelson and J. Lowden, "The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions," *DOP* 45 (1991), 59–68, and A.-M. Talbot, "Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII," *DOP* 46 (1992), 302. See also A. Weyl Carr, "Women and Monasticism in Byzantium," *ByzF* 9 (1985), 11–12, for further examples of manuscripts of the Scriptures owned by and/or produced for convents.

¹⁸On this distinction, see C. Galatariotou, "Byzantine Women's Monastic Communities," *JÖB* 38 (1988), 269–77.

¹⁹Petrides, "Nil Damilas," p. 109, lines 22–24.

²⁰*Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis, in Delehay, *Deux typica*, p. 47, lines 29–31, and p. 97, line 19–p. 98, line 6. On literacy among late Byzantine women, see A. Laiou, "The Role of Women in Byzantine Society," *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress*, Akten I/1 = *JÖB* 31.1 (1981), 253–57.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

Of the six manuscripts that form the basis of this study, four can be dated on paleographic grounds to the fourteenth century, one to the fifteenth century, while another manuscript carries the date of 1616. This time frame corresponds roughly to the heyday of female monasticism after Constantinople's recovery from the Crusaders under the Palaeologoi in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²¹ The texts they contain and each specific combination of texts in a manuscript may of course be much older than the manuscripts themselves. The manuscripts under discussion here are:

1. Ann Arbor, Library of the University of Michigan, cod. 50, fourteenth century²²
2. Athos, Dionysiou, cod. 166, copied by the monk Kyrillos at the expense of Gerasimos, 1616²³
3. Athos, Kutlumusiou, cod. 208, fifteenth century²⁴
4. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. 50 (Conv. Soppr. B. 1.1214), fourteenth century²⁵
5. Gothenburg, cod. gr. 4 (olim Kephallenia, Argostolion, cod. 3), fourteenth century²⁶
6. Vatican, cod. Pian. 36, fourteenth century.²⁷

Valuable insight into the production and intended use of these manuscripts can be gleaned from the nature of the assembly of the texts and their presentation. Three main

²¹For a general overview of the history of convents in late Byzantium, see M. Loukaki, "Monastères de femmes à Byzance du XII^e siècle jusqu'à 1453," in *Les femmes et le monachisme byzantin: Actes du Symposium Athènes, 28–29 mars 1988/Women and Byzantine Monasticism: Proceedings of the Athens Symposium, 28–29 March 1988*, ed. J. Y. Perreault (Athens, 1991).

²²S. de Ricci and W. J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, II (New York, 1937), 1112; Ehrhard, III, 906, n. 3. Not noted in these publications is the acephalous text of the *vita* of Irene of Chrysobalanton, fols. 2r–50r. The second text in the codex, the *vita* of Eupraxia, bears the number 11, an indication that the first nine texts of the original manuscript are now lost. I would like to thank Thelma Thomas for making it possible for me to consult the manuscript at a critical moment. I intend to devote a detailed study to this manuscript in due course.

²³Sp. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, I (Cambridge, 1895), 351–52 (henceforth cited as Lambros); Ehrhard, III, 913–15. This manuscript is also interesting in that it labels in its titles the saints Thecla, Photina, and Mary Magdalene as "equal to the apostles" (ἰσαπόστολος).

²⁴Lambros, 297; Ehrhard, III, 907–8. Amidst its female saints, this manuscript also includes the martyrdom of Stephen the Younger. Ehrhard's suggestion (III, 908, n. 2) that it was produced for the convent of Irene of Chrysobalanton in Constantinople has been disproved by Rosenqvist, p. li, n. 7, who has shown that the prayers on fols. 198v–201v bear no connection to the foundress of that convent.

²⁵A. Olivieri, "Indices codicum graecorum Magliabechianorum supplementum," *StItalFCL* 5 (1897), 413–15 (dating the manuscript to the 12th century); [H. Delehay], "Vita sanctae Olympiadis et narratio Sergiae de eiusdam translatione," *AB* 15 (1896), 406–8, for detailed description of the manuscript, dating it to the 14th century; Ehrhard, III, 912–13.

²⁶[Sp. Lambros], "Τρεῖς κώδικες ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ," *Νέος Ἑλλ.* 6 (1909), 322–27, dating it to the 12th century; F. Halkin, "Le ménologe grec de Gothenbourg," *AB* 60 (1942), 216–20; Ehrhard, III, 909–12; T. Kleberg, *Catalogus codicum graecorum et latinorum bibliothecae universitatis Gothoburgensis*, Acta Bibliothecae Universitatis Gothoburgensis 16, 2nd ed. (Gothenburg, 1974), 14–22.

²⁷I. B. Pitra and H. Stevenson, *Codices manuscripti graeci reginae suecorum et Pii PP II Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (Rome, 1888), 157–58; *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum graecorum bibliothecae Vaticanae*, ed. Hagiographi Bollandi and P. F. De' Cavalieri, SubsHag 7 (Brussels, 1899), 240; Ehrhard, III, 908–9. The manuscript lacks the first three texts of the original collection. It begins with the acephalous *passio* of Menodora, Metrodora,

points emerge, which I present here in summary. (See Appendix 1 for a synoptic table listing the contents of each manuscript.) The first observation is that no two collections are alike; in other words, there did not circulate a canon of Lives of holy women. Rather, each manuscript represents a new effort to assemble texts for a specific purpose. The second observation is that such gender-specific collections appear to be a phenomenon typical of the late Byzantine period, since all collections post-date the tenth-century *menologium* of Symeon Metaphrastes, a main source of texts, and three contain *vitae* by authors of the first quarter of the fourteenth century (Florence, Gothenburg, Kutlumuşiu).

For further verification of this second observation, we have to turn to supplementary evidence from Byzantium's neighbors. An analogous arrangement of our Greek manuscripts is preserved in the so-called Bđinski Zbornik, a manuscript copied in 1360 in Vidin (Bulgaria), now in the University Library in Ghent (ms 408), which contains exclusively Lives of holy women, translated from Greek into Church Slavonic.²⁸ In most cases, it is possible to identify the Greek original upon which the translation is based. Despite the relatively late date of the manuscript itself, all the hagiographical texts it contains pre-date the activity of Symeon Metaphrastes. It is thus conceivable that by the mid-tenth century, at the latest, there circulated a Greek collection of Lives of holy women that was translated as a whole into Church Slavonic (and is now accessible in the Bđinski Zbornik). On the other hand, it is equally possible that the compiler of this collection pieced together individual Lives from a variety of sources. In fact, this may be the more likely scenario. For this process is also attested in a Georgian hagiographical manuscript, probably of the tenth century, which precedes its section of Lives of holy women with a number of Lives of male saints. Here, too, the materials at the compiler's disposal were translations from the Greek of pre-metaphrastic Lives. This is the only instance where the compiler of such a collection comments on his work. In the colophon, he voices his frustration that, although he consulted many sources, his original intention of presenting only Lives of holy women was foiled by the lack of available material, so that he was compelled to augment his manuscript with a section on male saints.²⁹ It is impossible to ascertain in exactly what manner these Church Slavonic and Georgian compilations were put together and what Greek precedent they were based on. Nonetheless, it remains a remarkable fact that the grouping together of female saints in hagiographical manuscripts is attested for the areas in the cultural orbit of Byzantium several centuries earlier than in the empire itself.

The third observation is that on the basis of the selection of texts and their arrangement, we can distinguish the primary purpose of the manuscripts as intended either for

and Nymphodora, which carries the number 4. The last text, fols. 159r–176v, is a homily by Basil of Caesarea on Holy Baptism. I am grateful to the following institutions for microfilms of the manuscripts: Bibliotheca Vaticana (Rome), Biblioteca Nazionale (Florence), Institut d'Histoire et de Recherche des Textes (Paris), the Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies at the Mone Blatadon (Thessalonike), and the University Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

²⁸Bđinski Zbornik: *An Old Slavonic Menologium of Women Saints* (Ghent University Library Ms. 408, A.D. 1360), ed. and annot. J. L. Scharpé and F. Vyncke, with intro. by E. Voordeckers (Brugge, 1973). See also the review by H. Birnbaum, "A Calendar of Woman Saints," *ByzSt* 2.1 (1975), 63–67.

²⁹Discussion of the manuscript (no. 95) and translation of the colophon by K. Kekelidze, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur*, rev. M. Tarchnisvili with J. Assfalg, ST 185 (Vatican City, 1955), 394. Cf. also the catalogue by Th. D. Žordanija, *Opisanie rukopisej Tiflisskogo cerkovnogo muzeja*, I (Tbilisi, 1903), 96–114.

liturgical or for private reading. The four manuscripts—Dionysiou, Gothenburg, Kutlumu-siou, Vatican)—that make a rule of noting the date of the month for the Lives and aim at an even distribution of readings over a given period of time must have been produced primarily for liturgical reading in a formal setting, either in church or at mealtime. Of course, the same manuscripts may then also have been read privately by individuals.

The single most important source of texts for our collections is the *menologium* of Symeon Metaphrastes. But the nature of Symeon's *menologium* presented the compilers of the four manuscripts for liturgical use with a particular problem. His collection of Lives is extensive for the months from September to January, but then it thins out considerably for the following seven months, from February to August.³⁰ Three of the four liturgical collections thus follow their main source in concentrating on the feasts up to December (Vatican), January (Kutlumu-siou),³¹ or February (Gothenburg), respectively.³² The Gothenburg manuscript is also interesting in that it achieves a greater density of readings by selecting from the Lives of holy men short extracts that relate to the pious exploits of women. The fourth manuscript in this group, Dionysiou 166, succeeds in spreading out the readings over the whole year by drawing extensively upon a second source, the so-called Imperial Menologium of the eleventh century.³³ It does, however, take some liberties: Instead of Symeon Metaphrastes' version of the *vita* of Euphemia, it has the one by the ninth-century author Theodore Bestos, and it gives preference to an anonymous Life of Marina over the version of the Imperial Menologium.³⁴

The remaining two manuscripts—the Florence and Ann Arbor manuscripts—are designed for private reading. They can easily be identified—the Ann Arbor codex by the unsystematic arrangement of the texts it contains,³⁵ and the Florentinus by its undisguised literary aspirations. The Florentinus manuscript is in some ways a hybrid. It covers the whole year and notes the dates for most of its saints, thus lending itself to liturgical use. But its choice of texts points to a different purpose: Symeon Metaphrastes as a source is studiously avoided. Instead, we encounter renowned authors of a later date, such as John Staurakios (late thirteenth century),³⁶ Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos,³⁷

³⁰E.g., Ehrhard, II, 592; III, 1.

³¹The sequence of texts is jumbled after 31 December: Melania the Younger is followed by Anastasia the Elder, for whom no date is given in the manuscript, but whose usual days are 12, 28, or 29 October, and then Eusebia at her normal date of 24 January. Next there is a gap of several months until Theodora, who is commonly celebrated on 29 May or 18 or 19 July, followed by Irene of Chrysobalanton on 28 July, neither *vita* carrying a date. The last two texts in the manuscript are prayers for night vigils and a fragment of the Life of the Holy Virgin.

³²It is conceivable that these codices were supposed to be complemented by volumes for the remainder of the year, with texts from other sources.

³³On the Imperial Menologium, which contains abridged versions of saints' Lives, see Ehrhard, III, 342–407.

³⁴Also, the calendrical order is broken at two points: Theodosia (29 May) follows Febronia (25 June), and Myrope (14 July) follows Mary Magdalene (22 July).

³⁵No dates are given, and the arrangement does not correspond to the order of the calendar of saints. In its present form, the manuscript only contains five *vitae*, the first nine texts of the original arrangement having been lost (see above, note 22).

³⁶Author of the *Vita Theodora* on fols. 112r–126r; cf. H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1977), 689.

³⁷Author of the *Vita Mariae Magdalene*, fols. 166v–182v.

and Constantine Acropolites (both early fourteenth century),³⁸ and a lesser author of the same period, Makarios, monk of the Mangana monastery in Constantinople.³⁹ In his eagerness to include hagiographical works connected with three of the great litterati of the patristic period, the compiler of this collection even goes to the extent of transgressing hagiographical conventions. True, Gregory of Nyssa's *vita* of his sister Macrina⁴⁰ is commonly found in hagiographical manuscripts, as is the funerary oration on Gorgonia, composed by her illustrious brother Gregory of Nazianzen,⁴¹ but the Life of Drosis is included in the Florentinus merely on account of its authorship by John Chrysostom, even though she does not have a place in the Byzantine calendar of saints.⁴²

THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

Designed as they were for public or private reading in a monastic setting, what further information can we glean from our manuscripts about their intended audience? Only three of the manuscripts offer an answer to this question. Two codices were clearly addressing an audience of nuns. The Florentinus contains one text whose title is followed not by the usual formula with which the reader asks for the blessing of the abbot "pater, benedice" (εὐλόγησον πάτερ), but by "mater, benedice" (εὐλόγησον μήτηρ).⁴³ Obviously, it was an abbess who presided over the public reading of this text. The second instance is the manuscript now in the Kutlumusiou monastery of Mount Athos. The hagiographical section in this codex is preceded by five texts relating to the monastic experience. The last one carries the title "Instruction about the salvation of the soul and perseverance, read out in the gatherings of monks and to nuns,"⁴⁴ clearly an indication that this manuscript was intended to be used in a convent.

But there is one oddity among our group—the Dionysiou manuscript. This is the only codex that informs us about its provenance, patron, and destination.⁴⁵ It bears the date of 1 November 1616,⁴⁶ and thus belongs, strictly speaking, to the post-Byzantine period. It was copied by the monk Kyrillos for the hospital of the Dionysiou monastery on Mount Athos at the expense of the head of the hospital, Gerasimos.⁴⁷ This is indeed puzzling. I have not found attested any possession of manuscripts, other than medical reference works, among Byzantine hospitals, and this is unlikely to have changed after a century and a half of Ottoman rule. But the manuscript itself contains a clue that explains

³⁸ Author of the *Laudatio* of Horaiozele, fols. 210r–213v. On this author, see A.-M. Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period," in *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*, ed. S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton, 1991), 17–20; on both authors, see Beck, *Kirche*, 689–99.

³⁹ Author of the *martyrium* of Ia, who died in the Persian persecution of Shapur II, on fols. 214r–227r.

⁴⁰ Fols. 148v–166v.

⁴¹ Fols. 104v–112r.

⁴² Fols. 249r–257v; Ehrhard, III, 913, n. 1, but cf. also II, 223.

⁴³ Fol. 12r, *vita* of Euphrosyne. The significance of the formula εὐλόγησον πάτερ has been noted in Malin-grey, "Vie d'Olympias," 406, n. 2.

⁴⁴ Fol. 39 r: Διδασκαλία περὶ σωτηρίας ψυχῆς καὶ ὑπομονῆς ἀναγινωσκομένη ἐν ταῖς συνάξεσι τῶν μοναχῶν καὶ εἰς μοναστήριον.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion of translator, scribe, and patron of this manuscript, see Appendix 2.

⁴⁶ Subscription on fol. 412v.

⁴⁷ Fol. 3v: ἡ παρούσα βίβλος γέγραπται μὲν τοῖς ἀναλώμασι κυροῦ γερασίου νοσοκόμου τῆς μονῆς ἁγίου διονυσίου τοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἄθωνα τῇ δὲ χειρὶ τλήμονος κυρίλλου μοναχοῦ.

its use in a hospital setting. Among its offerings in Byzantine Greek, it contains one text, the martyrdom of Eupraxia, that was translated into the contemporary *koine* by the monk Ignatios, who was a well-known translator and scribe at Dionysiou at the time.⁴⁸ He prefaces his translation with a preface from his own pen: “Nothing is more desirable or useful for those who strive to be and would love to be saved, my beloved brothers, than the deeds and stories of the holy men and women who were pleasing to God. For such courage and bravery they can give to the reader and to the listener that it convinces them not only to bear misery and suffering with joy, but in many instances also to accept willingly even death itself when the moment should come.”⁴⁹

Noble and faithful endurance of pain, even to the point of death, is the lesson that should be learned from this text and, by extension, from the whole hagiographical collection. But who exactly is to learn that lesson? The patients in the hospital, of course, and—in keeping with the tradition of the Holy Mountain to ban any living female creature—they would all have been men. This is confirmed, and even underlined, by Ignatios in the concluding address to his audience: “But now we too, brothers, as we hear about the life and achievements of the holy woman, from now on as long as we still have the time, let us strive as much as we can to imitate the virtues and the good deeds of the holy woman.”⁵⁰ Unless we are dealing here with an unusual example of an institutionally endorsed quasi-erotic method of treatment—after all, women’s martyrdoms were often described in graphic physical detail⁵¹—the destination of this codex to a men’s hospital ward should make us wary of the facile conclusion that collections of women saints were “naturally” composed for the devotional use of women. The recent research of Alice-Mary Talbot on women on Mount Athos has shown that women saints were exempt from the traditional ban on female creatures. In fact, the libraries of the Athos monasteries contain a surprising number of hagiographical texts relating to holy women.⁵² That such *vitae* were widely read and admired on the Holy Mountain is confirmed by the story of Nikolaos, the cook in the monastery of St. Athanasios the Athonite. He was inspired by the example of St. Eupraxia to engage in all-night vigils for forty consecutive days.⁵³ And Neilos of Rossano, a central figure in the history of tenth-century Italo-Greek monasticism, was so impressed with Theodoret of Cyrillus’ account of women recluses in Syria

⁴⁸Fols. 314r–249v. Title: Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τῆς ὁσίας μητρὸς ἡμῶν εὐπραξίας μεταφρασθεὶς εἰς τὴν κοινὴν γλῶτταν παρὰ τοῦ ἐν ἱερομοναχοῦς ἰγνατίου τοῦ μοναστηρίου διονυσίου.

⁴⁹Fol. 314r: Ἄλλο δὲν εἶναι ποθεινότερον ἢ ὠφελιμώτερον εἰς ἐκείνους ὅπου ὀρέγονται καὶ ἀγαποῦν νὰ σωθῶν, ἀγαπητοὶ ἀδελφοί, ὥσάν αἱ πράξεις καὶ τὰ διηγήματα τῶν ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν τῶν εὐαρεστησάντων τῷ θεῷ· διότι τοιοῦτον θάρσος καὶ τὸ σάτυν ἀνδρίαν ἐμποροῦσι νὰ δώσουν καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀκούοντα· ὅτι οὐχὶ μόνον κόπου καὶ ταλαιπωρίας τοὺς καταπεῖθει νὰ ὑποφέρουν μετὰ χαρᾶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν θάνατον πολλάκις ἐὰν καὶ ἔση καιρὸς μετὰ προθυμίας νὰ καταδεχθῶν.

⁵⁰Fol. 349r: ἀλλ’ οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀδελφοί, ὅπου ἀκούομεν τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὰ κατορθώματα τῆς ἁγίας, τὸρα ἀκόμ’ ἕως ὅπου ἔχομεν καιρὸν, ἅς σπουδάσωμεν ὅσον ἐμποροῦμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς νὰ μιμηθῶμεν τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ τὰς καλοσύνας ὅπου εἶχεν ἡ ὁσία.

⁵¹On this issue, see A. Kazhdan, “Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries,” *DOP* 44 (1990), 131–43.

⁵²I would like to thank Alice-Mary Talbot for the following two references and for generously communicating to me the results of her paper “Women on Mount Athos,” presented at the 28th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, U.K., March 1994.

⁵³*Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, ed. J. Noret, CCSG 9 (Turnhout, 1982), *vita* B, chap. 44, pp. 178–79.

who were able to endure prolonged periods of fasting that he resolved to emulate their asceticism.⁵⁴ No gender specificity obtains here, and, perhaps even more significantly, there is no reluctance on the part of men to choose prominent women saints as their models.

FEMALE SAINTS AND THEIR POPULARITY AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

The manuscript collections here demonstrate that subject matter and audience are not necessarily matched according to gender. The assumption that a female audience is particularly interested in stories about women is thus deserving of further scrutiny. Modern scholars, when forced by the absence of other firm indications to make an inspired guess about the author or audience of a saint's Life, have often taken recourse to the notion that women must be interested in female topics. I will readily admit that even the present study was initiated in the expectation that the manuscripts of Lives of female saints would certainly offer new insights into the religious experience of Byzantine women. The following examples illustrate the pervasive application of this notion: The *vita* of Matrona of Perge—a fifth-century runaway housewife and mother who disguised herself as a eunuch in order to be admitted to the monastery of Basianos in Constantinople and later founded her own convent in the capital, where she held the title of “episkopos” and her nuns routinely wore men's clothing—is a case in point. Because of the attention to the female characters and the “sensitivity” in their description, it has been argued not only that the *vita* was written with a female audience in mind, but also that it must have been composed by a female author.⁵⁵ Female authorship has also, with all due caution, been suggested for the Life of Irene, abbess of Chrysobalanton. Here, too, the main argument is the convincing rendering of women's experience in the seclusion of the convent.⁵⁶ Along the same lines, it was put forward that, because of its content, our Gothenburg manuscript was “obviously” produced for a convent.⁵⁷ Analogous scholarly arguments have been applied with regard to the history of church decoration. Because female saints are frequently depicted in the narthex, it has been assumed that this was the place from which Byzantine women followed the liturgy.⁵⁸

This is not the place to discuss the merits of such methods, persuasive as they may be—especially when the lack of evidence forces the scholar onto the shaky ground of speculation. My aim here is to add some facets that can further our understanding of the spectrum of Byzantine conceptions of gender and contribute to a more diversified and, hence, more accurate view of the interaction between text and audience. More specifically, I shall investigate the saints' Lives contained in our six manuscript collections in

⁵⁴ *Vita* of Neilos of Rossano, *AASS*, Sept. 7:294D.

⁵⁵ E. C. Topping, “St. Matrona and Her Friends: Sisterhood in Byzantium,” in *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to J. Hussey*, ed. J. Chrysostomides (Camberley, Surrey, 1988), discusses the *vita prima*. Yet, the author of this *vita* refers to himself with male participles: cf. *AASS*, Nov. 3:791A, 792D, 812A. Our manuscripts give the version by Symeon Metaphrastes, who tones down the story so as to be less challenging to the male world of privileges.

⁵⁶ Rosenqvist, p. xl–xliii. In her review of this book, A.-M. Talbot, *Speculum* 65 (1990), 225, rejects this suggestion as highly unlikely in view of the paucity of hagiographical works composed by women.

⁵⁷ Halkin, “Le ménologe grec de Gothenbourg” (as above, note 26), 219.

⁵⁸ A. Chatzinikolaou, “Helige,” *RBK* 2:1085. But see Th. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park-London, 1971), 130–34, for a detailed and critical discussion of the sources.

order to establish whether the authors indicate that they are addressing an audience of men or women, and if so how they accommodate them. For example, Theodoret of Cyrus (sixth century) recognized and acknowledged the need to differentiate between the demands of a male or a female audience. He explains the rationale behind the inclusion of men and women in his *Historia religiosa*: “We have recalled different lives, and added accounts of women to those of men, for this reason: that men old and young, and women too, may have models of philosophy, and that each person, as he receives the impress of his favorite life, may have as a rule and regulator of his own life the one presented in our account.”⁵⁹

The vast majority of hagiographical authors—and our sample of Lives of holy women is no exception—are men. The many *vitae* that treat female saints and martyrs without further comment in the same way as their male counterparts are of little interest in the present context, but quite a few authors insist upon addressing their audience, and if they do they invariably are speaking to both men and women. The *vita* of the martyrs Cyprian and Justina begins by pointing out that both men and women were among the followers of Christ.⁶⁰ The penitent harlot Pelagia of Antioch is introduced as an example of spiritual benefit to men as well as women.⁶¹ The account of the *vita* of Matrona of Perge, the fifth-century abbess in Constantinople, is specifically intended to spur the men to competition, while at the same time offering a model to women.⁶² Euphrosyne is also supposed to be of particular appeal to men and women, because, as a woman who disguised herself in men’s clothing, she shared the experience of both the home and the marketplace.⁶³ The author of the *vita* of Theoktiste of Lesbos, a refugee from the Arab invasions who lived as a hermit in the wilderness of Paros for thirty-five years, admits that it will be difficult for both women and men to match her lifestyle—perhaps a sly acknowledgment of the fantastic nature of this story?⁶⁴

A sizeable number of texts draw attention to the fact that their hero is a woman and seize this opportunity for some wordplay on the paradox of the manly strength and resolve of the saint residing in a woman’s frail body.⁶⁵ Very often, this serves as a literary topos to extol the accomplishments of the heroine, which surpass those of men since she

⁵⁹Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia religiosa*, in Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des moines de Syrie*, SC 257, ed. P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, II (Paris, 1979), chap. 30.7, 248; *A History of the Monks in Syria*, trans. R. M. Price (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1985), 188.

⁶⁰*Vita* of Cyprian and Justina by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 115, col. 849A. Similarly, also, John Chrysostom, *encomium* on Pelagia, PG 50, col. 579A.

⁶¹*Vita* of Pelagia of Antioch by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 116, cols. 908D–909A.

⁶²*Vita* of Matrona of Perge by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 116, col. 921A.

⁶³*Vita* of Euphrosyne, *AASS*, Nov. 3:862B: Ἄν δὲ ταῦτα καὶ γυνή, ἀνδράσι μέσοις τὴν πολιτείαν ἀστράψασα καὶ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ καὶ περιφανεί τῇ πόλει ὅπως δῆποτε βούλοιτο στερρῶς καὶ ἀνδρικῶς διαφέρουσα, ὅσῃ ἄρα παρέξει τὴν μίμησιν καὶ παράκλησιν τοῖς κατὰ Θεὸν αἰρουμένοις βιοῦν. I take the dative plural at the end of the sentence to be an inclusive masculine.

⁶⁴*Vita* of Theoktiste of Lesbos, *AASS*, Nov. 4:232E.

⁶⁵*Vita* of Domnica, in Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά, ed. Th. Joannou (Venice, 1884), 269; *encomium* of Euphemia by Theodore Bestos, in F. Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine*, SubsHag 41 (Brussels, 1965), 111; *martyrium* of Anastasia and her companions, PG 116, col. 577D; *vita* of Febronia, *AASS*, June 5:25A. Such a paradox becomes particularly salient in the case of women who disguise themselves as men. A good example is Pelagia of Antioch, who ends her life on the Mount of Olives as the monk Pelagius: *vita* by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 116, col. 920A. The *vita* of Theoktiste of Lesbos presents an unusual variation on this theme: After thirty-five years of solitude in the wilderness, she is seen by a hunter “in the form of a woman, but superhuman in appearance” (τὸ μὲν εἶδος γυνή, τὸ δὲ φαινόμενον ὑπεράνθρωπον): Joannou, Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά, p. 28.

started out from the disadvantaged position of the weaker sex, forever tainted with the sinfulness of Eve.⁶⁶

An interesting example, full of neologisms playing on the theme of masculinity and femininity, is the unedited *vita* of Paraskeue the Younger (BHG 1420z), which is found in the manuscripts of Florence and Gothenburg:

Beautiful are the top performances of god-loving men against the common enemy, and they are very much worthy of speeches of praise. But by far better and most illustrious are the genuine deeds of youth performed by women of masculine spirit and much justified to receive praise. For they have the lot of a weaker nature and yet they were not hindered by this at all to climb up to the summit of virtue, but they made the female (element) male through a virile mind and accomplished the same and even more than the men.⁶⁷

In such passages, the female saint is set up as an example to both men and women. Very often, though, this topos is further developed specifically to address the men in the audience by appealing to their competitive spirit: They should not allow themselves to be outdone in virtue by a woman; after all, if a woman can ascend to such accomplishments, why can't they?⁶⁸ This agonistic motif serves as the premise of the Life of Mary of Egypt that is attributed to Sophronius of Jerusalem, and was later incorporated, without changes, into the *menologium* of Symeon Metaphrastes. The account of Mary's conversion from harlot to hermit is embedded in the story of the accomplished monk Zosimas, who leaves his dwelling in the Judean desert in search of a monk who surpasses him in perfection, only to be led by divine providence to encounter the emaciated and half-naked Mary in the desert of Jordania.⁶⁹

These examples show that although the hagiographers sometimes speak to men in the audience, spurning them to competition and imitation, and on occasion displaying their awareness of a female presence in the audience, most *vitae* lack a direct address to the latter. A few texts, however, make an effort to single out the women in their audience by speaking directly to them. These seem to have their origin not as proper *vitae*—i.e., works with literary aspirations designed to be encountered in written form in the seclusion of a monastery

⁶⁶ *Vita* of Cyprian of Antioch and Justina by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 115, col. 861A (Justina determines not to follow the example of Eve); *vita* of Melania the Younger by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 116, col. 753A (men and women can excel in virtue, especially women who compete with men and thus become examples), col. 756A (her husband does not wish to appear lacking in virtue behind his wife), and col. 760B (by giving an example of virtue to her husband, Melania is the opposite of Eve). See also the prologue to the *vita* of Elisabeth of Heracleia: Halkin, "Sainte Élisabeth" (as above, note 5), 251.

⁶⁷ Florence, BN, Conv. Soppr. B. 1.1214, fol. 2r: Καλὰ μὲν καὶ τὰ τῶν φιλοθέω(ν) ἀνδρῶν ἀριστεύματα κατὰ τοῦ κοινοῦ πολεμίου καὶ μεγίστων τῶν ἐγκωμίων ἐπάξια· κρείττω δέ γε πολλῶ καὶ περιφανέστερα τὰ τῶν ἀνδριοφρόνων γυναικῶν γενν(αῖα) νεανιεύματα· καὶ πλείον(ων) δικαιοτάτα τῶν ἐπαινῶν τετυχηκέναι· ὅσω γοῦν καὶ ἀσθενεστέρας μετείληχον φύσεως καὶ παρὰ ταύτης οὐδαμῶς ἀναδραμεῖν εἰς τὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀκρότατον τὸ παρ(ά)παν ἐνεποδίσθησαν· ἀλλ(ά) δὴ καὶ τὸ θῆλυ ἀνδρικοπ(ά)τω ἠρρένωσαν λογισμῶ· καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ ἢ καὶ μείζω τοῖς ἀνδρ(ά)σιν εἰργάσαντο.

⁶⁸ See for example, John Chrysostom, *encomium* on the martyr Drosis, PG 50, col. 688; *martyrium* of Ia, in H. Delehay, *Les versions grecques des actes des martyrs persans sous Sapor II*, PO 2.4 (Turnhout, 1971), 462. On occasion, the agonistic element is built into the narrative, when the persecutor is enraged that the martyr, who is only a woman, prevails against his use of force in argumentation or torture: *martyrium* of Euphemia by Symeon Metaphrastes, in Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine*, 155; *vita* of Catherine of Alexandria, PG 116, cols. 281C-D and 284A-C; metaphrasis of the *passio* of Tatiana, in F. Halkin, *Légendes grecques des "Martyres romaines"*, SubsHag 55 (Brussels, 1973), 64.

⁶⁹ Sophronius, *vita* of Mary of Egypt, PG 87.3, cols. 3697–3726.

or the privacy of a home—but as encomiastic speeches, delivered orally before a large crowd of men and women gathered for the annual feast of the saint, and later circulated in writing. The encomiast of Bernike and Prosdoke, two sisters who were martyred in front of their mother Domnina, for example, calls at the most dramatic points in his story upon the mothers and daughters in the audience to pay particular attention and to follow their example.⁷⁰ The *vita* of the desert hermit Synkletike, in which the narrative takes second place to extensive passages of spiritual exhortation, was probably also originally delivered orally. It, too, specifically addresses men as well as women in the audience.⁷¹ Because they were writing for a mixed audience, then, male hagiographers of female saints only rarely saw the need to pay special attention to the female component.

In some instances, we can glimpse the special appeal that women saints could have for a male audience. This is evident when the hagiographer includes himself among the admirers of the saint—and thus casts himself in the role of the prototypical member of the audience—by explaining the motivations that prompted him to pursue his topic. The reasons are very personal: Theodore Bestos' *encomium* on Euphemia, delivered before an audience that he addresses as a "choir of priestly men,"⁷² shows a man's tender affection for this saintly woman in his application of extensive passages from the Song of Solomon to selected parts of her body, including her breasts and navel.⁷³ Another display of personal devotion, this time combined with corporate patronage, by a man to "his" woman saint is the *martyrium* of Ia, who died in the Persian persecution under Shapur II. It was composed by Makarios, the monk and presbyter in the Mangana monastery, which counted among its prized possessions the saint's relics.⁷⁴ His intention was to present his audience—starting, presumably, with his fellow monks—with a model, an archetype, that they could imitate in their daily struggle with the forces of the Evil One.⁷⁵ The presence of Ia's relics would certainly have strengthened their resolve. Personal devotion out of gratitude to the saint is what prompts the author of the *vita* of the empress Theophano to compose his account, as well as canons, for her liturgical commemoration. He explains at great length how he had benefited from her miraculous healing powers at her tomb in the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, as had his father, his mother, and his brother.⁷⁶ Women saints were thus respected, loved, and admired by men and women alike as a distinguished group among those who are granted a dwelling place in heaven, and the men who committed their deeds to writing were well aware of their universal appeal.

A Notable Discrepancy

What if men were writing for an exclusively female audience? Here it is interesting to adduce, by way of comparison, the treatises of spiritual advice addressed by men of

⁷⁰ *Martyrium* of Bernike and Prosdoke, PG 50, cols. 638, 640 (bis).

⁷¹ *Vita* of Synkletike, PG 28, col. 1500B: Τέκνα, πάντες καὶ πάσαι; col. 1533D: διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παρθένῳ ἢ ἐν μοναχῷ προφανῇ τυγχάνει; col. 1549A: Ἐν κοινοβίῳ οὐσαι, τὴν ὑπακοὴν μᾶλλον τῆς ἀσκήσεως προκρίνωμεν; col. 1549C: καὶ ἐν κοινοβίῳ οὐσας . . . ἐξορία ἑαυτὰς παρεδώκαμεν.

⁷² *Encomium* of Euphemia by Theodore Bestos, in Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcedoine*, 112: χορὸς ἀνδρῶν ἱερῶν.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 126–28.

⁷⁴ On Makarios and his monastery, see also Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 24–25.

⁷⁵ *Martyrium* of Ia, in Delehay, *Actes des martyrs*, 462 and 473.

⁷⁶ E. Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die hl. Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," *MASP*, 8th ser., 3.2 (1898), 17–24.

the church to individual women. These authors, who were bishops or abbots, took for granted the need to concentrate on the precedent of important women saints, even to the point of excluding holy men. Take, for example, the extensive correspondence of Theodore the Studite in the late eighth and early ninth century, which includes a considerable number of letters addressed to women.⁷⁷ Theodore usually contents himself with general words of praise for their resistance to iconoclast pressures, but if he sees fit to be more specific and to select examples from hagiography, it is to point out that in virtue and steadfastness his women correspondents deserve to be compared to earlier female martyrs such as Thecla, Febronia of Sibapolis in Mesopotamia, Eugenia of Alexandria, Matrona of Thessalonike, and Eupraxia of Constantinople.⁷⁸ Only once, in addressing a group of thirty nuns, does he prefer the obvious parallel of the Forty Martyrs over a comparison with an individual holy woman.⁷⁹ In the early fourteenth century, Matthew, bishop of Ephesus, sent a letter of condolence to Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina. In order to console her after the death of her spiritual advisor Theoleptos, metropolitan of Philadelphia, he invokes the example of Thecla, who remained close to Paul in spirit, even though they were apart.⁸⁰ The same addressee later received a sequence of letters from her second, unidentified spiritual advisor, who attempts to explain and justify his refusal to pay more frequent visits to his spiritual daughter by pointing to the example of the holy women of an earlier age.⁸¹ Irene, however, knew her saints at least as well as her correspondent. Much to her advisor's consternation, she was able in her reply to summon examples of other holy women that testified to the contrary.⁸²

This tendency by male authors to present their spiritual daughters with edifying material to match is carried to an extreme by the abbot Isaïas, who wrote to Theodora Angelina in 1204 after the death of her father, the emperor Isaac II. In his desire to provide inspiration and advice, Isaïas casts their relation of spiritual guidance in the mold of that of the desert father Isaïas and the nun Theodora. More than that, he takes the unprecedented step of putting selected sayings of the desert fathers into the mouths of some well-known desert mothers.⁸³ His collection, he points out, is a pioneering work,

⁷⁷See A. P. Kazhdan and A.-M. Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," *BZ* 84/85 (1991/92), 396–400.

⁷⁸Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. G. Fatouros, 2 vols. (Berlin-New York, 1992), Ep. 87, line 14 (Thecla and Febronia); Ep. 244, lines 17–20 (Thecla, Febronia, Eugenia, Matrona); Ep. 397, lines 20–23 (Thecla and Febronia); Ep. 472, lines 30–32 (Thecla, Febronia, Eupraxia).

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, Ep. 403, 13–15. He probably refers to the male martyrs of Sebasteia rather than the female martyrs of Heracleia: See Kazhdan and Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," 400, n. 40.

⁸⁰L. Previale, "Due monodie inedite di Matteo di Efeso," *BZ* 41 (1941), p. 30, lines 27–37. See also D. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250–1500* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. 61–66. Theoleptos, himself, in addressing Irene and her nuns at the convent of Philanthropos Soter, however, did not set up hagiographical examples, concentrating instead on (male) figures from the Old and the New Testaments: Theoleptos of Philadelphia, *Monastic Discourses* (as above, note 9), *passim*. Similarly, in his letters addressing Irene as his spiritual daughter, Theoleptos supports his advice with quotations from the desert fathers Arsenios, Anthony, and Poimen (the latter commenting on a repenting prostitute), but abstains from any reference to female saints: cf. *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia*, ed. A. C. Hero (Brookline, Mass., 1994), Ep. 2, p. 44, lines 104–11; Ep. 2, p. 46, lines 129–31; Ep. 2, p. 50, lines 203–9.

⁸¹*A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance: The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina*, ed. A. C. Hero (Brookline, Mass., 1986), letter 16, p. 78, lines 3–14; letter 17, p. 86, lines 46–56.

⁸²*Ibid.*, letter 17, p. 84, lines 1–3.

⁸³J. Gouillard, "Une compilation spirituelle du XIII^e siècle. 'Le livre II de l'abbé Isaïe,'" *EO* 38 (1939), 72–90, and I. Hausherr, "Le Métérikon de l'abbé Isaïe," *OCP* 12 (1946), 286–301.

and he proudly entitles it “meterikon,” in contradistinction to the “paterikon,” or collection of Sayings of the Desert Fathers. This “meterikon” is combined with the Lives of Melania the Younger, Synkletike, and Theodora, as well as spiritual advice from Isaias’ own pen, to make up a complete volume. An important part of his advice is his frequent encouragement to Theodora to engage in private reading, suggesting as suitable material the Lives of the saints and, of course, his own treatise.⁸⁴ If men address an exclusively female audience, then, they make special efforts to illustrate their words of edification and instruction with examples of holy women.

How does this compare to the few instances when women patronesses or authors were in a position to select their hagiographical material? Here we observe that both male and female saints can provide inspiration. In fact, in a society where even accomplished women internalized, reiterated, and perpetuated the entrenched conceptions about their inherited burden as “daughters of Eve,”⁸⁵ it comes as no surprise that even when the patroness of a manuscript was able to influence the choice of reading material for her sisters in the spirit, she did not show any preference for the *vitae* of female saints. In the subscription to a manuscript commissioned by Anna Komnena Raoulaina in the fourteenth century for her convent in Constantinople (Athos, Pantokrator 6),⁸⁶ she explains that the codex was specifically put together at great expense to contain the basic panegyrics for the feasts of the liturgical year and that the texts were gathered from several sources with considerable effort. Nothing in this collection of patristic writings and hagiographical texts—twelve on male saints, and two on female saints (Marina and Irene of Chrysobalanton)—would hint at the destination of the codex to a convent, apart perhaps from the noticeable preponderance of texts relating to the Holy Virgin.⁸⁷

Although the number of hagiographical works known to be composed by female authors is very small, they allow for some interesting comparisons with the work of their male counterparts. Just like them, the women authors were prompted by personal considerations to put pen to paper. The saints of their choice were those they could identify with not because of their gender, but because of their own political situation, because of local pride, or out of a personal attachment. Such is the case of Theodosia, the author of a hymn on the ninth-century saint Joannikios. It has been argued convincingly that she was the abbess of the Mone Kalybiou near Constantinople and that she was personally acquainted with Joannikios, who took great interest in that convent. After his death, Theodosia hastened to celebrate, with a hymn, the saint who had become something of a spiritual patron to her community.⁸⁸ In the late thirteenth century, Theodora Raoulaina, who was one of the foremost intellectuals of her time—a scribe, scholar, book col-

⁸⁴Gouillard, “Compilation spirituelle,” 87.

⁸⁵The self-denigrating tone in which well-bred aristocratic women speak of themselves has been noted by C. Galatariotou, “Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender,” *BMGS* 9 (1984–85), 66–68.

⁸⁶For the identification of this convent as that of Χριστοῦ τοῦ κραταίου, see Rosenqvist, p. lii, n. 9.

⁸⁷Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos* (as above, note 23), 92–94.

⁸⁸E. Catafygiotu Topping, “Theodosia: Melodos and Monastria,” *Diptycha* 4 (1986/87), 386, and eadem, “Women Hymnographers in Byzantium,” *Diptycha* 3 (1982/83), 102–4. Thekla the nun, who was probably a contemporary of Theodosia, wrote a hymn to the Theotokos that has been interpreted as a display of specifically feminine religious sentiment: E. Catafygiotu Topping, “Thekla the Nun: In Praise of Woman,” *GOTR* 25 (1980), 353–70, and eadem, “Women Hymnographers,” 104–7.

lector, and patroness of a circle of learned men⁸⁹—passed her prison term, imposed because of her rejection of the emperor's conciliatory policy with the Latins in the Union of Lyons, with the composition of a saints' Life. The subject of her choice (or rather, of her mother's urging) were the brothers Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi, who had endured vicious tortures at the hand of the emperor Theophilos because of their resistance to Iconoclasm.⁹⁰ Theodora clearly identified with their predicament more than she would have with the fate of any female martyr of the Christian persecution. She may also have wished to invite comparison between the sufferings of the brothers Graptoi and the blinding and imprisonment inflicted on her brothers-in-law by the emperor Michael VIII for their anti-unionist stance.⁹¹ In a similar vein, it is purely local interest that prompted the nun Palaiologina in the convent of St. Theodora in Thessalonike in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century to compose canons on the two most prominent saints of her town, Demetrius and Theodora.⁹² The only woman known to have composed liturgical hymns on a large scale is Kassia, abbess of a convent in ninth-century Constantinople.⁹³ She shows no particular predilection for female topics: None of the twenty-three hymns on saints and other feasts of the liturgical year for which she is unequivocally accepted as the author make women saints their subject.⁹⁴ But this "indisputable" evidence is challenged once we consider the thirty-seven hymns that some manuscripts attribute to Kassia, others to male authors. No fewer than twenty-two of these are written in honor of female saints. In many instances, modern scholars seem inclined to accept Kassia's authorship of these hymns simply because she was a woman herself.⁹⁵ One wonders, therefore, if the Byzantine scribes who attributed these hymns to Kassia may not have followed the same assumption.

Another motivation for women to compose a hagiographical account was pride in a famous predecessor or foundress. These authors were often close associates of the saint and eyewitnesses to her accomplishments. They made it their task to perpetuate the saint's memory within the convent, that is to say, they were writing for a primarily female audience. An early example is the martyrdom of Febronia, who received assistance and encouragement in her ordeal from her abbess, Bryene. It was Thomaïs, Bryene's successor, who later composed the account of Febronia's martyrdom.⁹⁶ In the seventh century, the abbess Sergia wrote the account of the invention and deposition of the relics of Olym-pias, a wealthy Constantinopolitan widow and supporter of John Chrysostom. Sergia proudly explains her own role in the recuperation of the precious relics of the foundress of her convent after the disturbances of the Persian advance on Chalcedon, and she later

⁸⁹On this exceptional woman, see now Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, 37 and 44–45.

⁹⁰Talbot, "Bluestocking Nuns," 605–6 and 615; and Catafygiotu Topping, "Women Hymnographers," 110–11.

⁹¹Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles," 20.

⁹²Talbot, "Bluestocking Nuns," 607, and Beck, *Kirche*, 797. The only information that survives about her writing is Sphrantzes, *Chronicon* XVIII.2, in *Georgios Sphrantzes, Memorii, 1401–1477*, *Scriptores byzantini* 5, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1966), p. 32, lines 20–24.

⁹³I. Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* (Berlin, 1967). Cf. also Catafygiotu Topping, "Women Hymnographers," 107–10.

⁹⁴Rochow, *Dichterin Kassia*, 35–46.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 50, 51, 53–54.

⁹⁶*Vita* of Febronia, *AASS*, June 5:17–35.

seizes the opportunity to add some words of spiritual admonishment. Sergia makes no secret whom she wishes to address: the nuns in the convent, and, in particular, future abbesses, all of whom are called upon to imitate the example of Olympias,⁹⁷ but she also assumes that her treatise will find a male readership.⁹⁸ The primary reasoning for women in selecting their hagiographical subject matter thus does not differ from the motivation of the male authors discussed above: They have a personal stake in the subject. Gender plays only a secondary role.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HAGIOGRAPHICAL MODELS

So far, we have been able to show that men and women authors are interested in female saints for the same reasons and that they consider the stories of their heroines to be of general benefit, as Sergia's work attests. But when male authors explicitly address a female audience, they show a noticeable tendency to assume that women have a heightened interest in other women. However, this is not borne out in the actual choices made by women as patrons of manuscripts for convent libraries or as hagiographers. It appears that male perceptions of how best to address the needs of a female audience do not necessarily coincide with the preferences expressed by women themselves, if they were in a position to do so.

This tendency of male authors to establish female models for the saintly conduct of women finds further confirmation on the level of the hagiographical stories themselves. Here, the authors' efforts are contained within the narrative. They aim to point out the precedent of the saintly women of an earlier age, either in order to demonstrate how the heroine was influenced by their example, or for rhetorical purposes, in order to establish a direct lineage between the heroine and her prominent predecessors. There are some exceptions: Just as the cook Nikolaos on Mount Athos chose to imitate the nightly vigils of saint Euphrasia, women saints were sometimes said to be inspired by the example of holy men. The saint who most impressed Irene of Chrysobalanton, for instance, was the desert father Arsenios. Deeply touched by his *vita*, Irene proceeded to emulate his ascetic practice of standing for long periods of time (up to several days and nights) with outstretched arms.⁹⁹

More frequently, though, the narrators chose to align their saints with female prototypes. Euphemia, as she leads a group of like-minded women, is compared by Theodore Bestos to the prophetess Miriam.¹⁰⁰ He later places his heroine at the top of a catalogue of saintly women from the Old Testament: Mary the sister of Aaron, Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, Jael, Deborah, Anna the mother of Samuel, the Shunammite woman, and the widow of Zarephath.¹⁰¹ The same topos is applied by Niketas Paphlagon in praising the Roman martyr Anastasia (to mention a text which does not figure in our collections). He construes a similar list, which begins with the Old Testament figures of Sarah, Rebecca,

⁹⁷ "Narratio Sergiae de translatione sanctae Olympiadis" (as above, note 12), p. 44, lines 8–9; p. 49, line 24; p. 49, lines 29–30 (call to imitation).

⁹⁸ This is evident from her explanation that this treatise has been composed for the reading of all, men as well as women (πρὸς τὸ γινώσκειν πάντας καὶ πάσας): *ibid.*, p. 44, lines 11–12.

⁹⁹ *Vita* of Irene of Chrysobalanton, in Rosenqvist, p. 16, lines 19–p. 18, line 18.

¹⁰⁰ *Encomium* of Euphemia by Theodore Bestos, in Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine* (as above, note 65), 115.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

Rachel, Anna the mother of Samuel, Deborah, Judith, Esther, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, Anna the wife of Joachim, and Elisabeth the wife of Zacharias, continues with Mary Magdalene, followed by a whole catalogue of martyrs, led by Thecla, and then continues with Euphemia, Irene, Catherine of Alexandria, Sophia and her daughters Pistis, Elpis, and Agape, and concludes with Rhipsimas and Febronia.¹⁰² Individual women from the Old Testament can also be singled out as models for their Christian imitators: The empress Theopano is a new Sarah and a new Rebecca in lending moral support to her husband,¹⁰³ and the rewards for the faith of the nun Theodora are said to equal those of the widow of Zarephath.¹⁰⁴

Among the women of the Christian era, it is Thecla who occupies the place of pride. She is presented as the model for later women saints of rather diverse callings, such as Synkletike, a desert hermit,¹⁰⁵ Olympias, the wealthy widow and foundress of the monastery in Constantinople in the late fourth century,¹⁰⁶ Golindouch, a Persian martyr of the seventh century,¹⁰⁷ and Theodosia, a martyr of the iconoclastic persecution.¹⁰⁸ Less prominent points of reference can also be found: In preparation for her martyrdom, Febronia is encouraged by the abbess Bryene, who had practically raised her, to remember all the martyrs, "not only men, but women and children" who had gone before her. Bryene then goes on to share for one last time the memories of the stories of the women martyrs they had enjoyed together—Lybe and Leonis and the girl Eutropia and her mother.¹⁰⁹ And many female saints, especially of the post-iconoclastic period, are depicted as having a particular affection for and affinity to the Virgin Mary and her image.¹¹⁰ Paraskeue the Younger, for example, always carries with her an icon of the Holy Virgin and gazes at it intently during her prayers.¹¹¹

These hagiographical representations correspond to the trend, exhibited by male authors who address their edifying works to a female audience, to connect women with saintly prototypes who are also women. A more detailed study than can be attempted here could draw on complementary historical evidence in order to gain a more complete impression of the religious models and societal forces that were operative in the forma-

¹⁰²Nicetas Paphlagon, "Oratio XVII—In laudem S. Anastasiae," PG 105, cols. 369D–372A.

¹⁰³*Vita* of Theophano, in Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte" (as above, note 76), p. 8, lines 20–21. Sarah, of course, makes a suitable prototype for married women. As such, Sarah and Abraham are compared to the parents of Gorgonia in the *encomium* by her brother Gregory of Nazianzen, PG 35, col. 793A-B.

¹⁰⁴*Vita* of Theodora of Thessalonike by John Staurakios, ed. E. Kurtz, "Des Klerikers Gregorios Bericht über Leben, Wundertaten und Translation der hl. Theodora von Thessalonich nebst der Metaphrase des Joannes Staurakios," *MASP*, 8th ser., 6.1 (1902), p. 64, lines 1–3.

¹⁰⁵*Vita* of Synkletike, PG 28, cols. 1489C–1492A.

¹⁰⁶"Vita sanctae Olympiadis et narratio Sergiae" (as above, note 25), p. 410, line 5. Later, her generosity toward John Chrysostom is compared to that of the women who were followers of Christ (p. 415, lines 16–17), and she is counted among the female confessors of the faith (p. 422, line 6).

¹⁰⁷*Passio* of Golindouch, in *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt*, ed. B. Latysev, II (St. Petersburg, 1912; repr. Leipzig, 1970), p. 170, line 24.

¹⁰⁸*Vita* of Theodosia by Constantine Acropolites, PG 140, col. 921C.

¹⁰⁹*Vita* of Febronia, *AASS*, June 5:23B-C. This text, it must be noted, was composed by a female author, Thomais, Bryene's successor as abbess of the convent.

¹¹⁰E.g., the *vita* of Elisabeth of Heracleia, in Halkin, "Sainte Élisabeth" (as above, note 5), 261–62; *vita* of Theophano, in Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte," p. 3, line 31–p. 4, line 21. An early example from the 7th century is the *vita* of Mary of Egypt, attributed to Sophronius, where the image of the Virgin is instrumental in bringing the harlot to repentance: PG 87.3, col. 3713B (and again col. 3717A).

¹¹¹Florence, BN, Conv. Soppr. B. 1.1214, fols. 4r, 5r; Gothenburg, cod. gr. 4, fols. 48r, 49r.

tion of young nuns and female saints. Some work has already been done to show that their calling to the monastic life and their choice of convent is frequently determined by family ties.¹¹² A further line of inquiry could focus on the gender distribution of the clientele of male and female saints, in an attempt to establish whether holy women were favored by female visitors, miracle-seekers, and benefactors. Only then can we be certain about the preferences of the women of Byzantium, and only then will we be able to verify the validity of the assumption, expressed by modern scholars and male hagiographers in Byzantium alike, that a female audience would have a greater interest in subjects about women. In the meantime, our probe of the hagiographical texts and related works should caution against automatically associating texts regarding women with a female audience, unless there is additional supporting evidence.

Observations on the textual level thus confirm our findings with regard to the six manuscript collections analyzed here. Three of them are of unspecified destinations, two are clearly intended for use by nuns, while the designation of the sixth manuscript in the seclusion of an Athos monastery gives us pause to reconsider facile assumptions and foregone conclusions about the relation between texts, books, and audience. It is worth considering that the grouping together of Lives of women saints was to some extent simply a convenient way of selecting from and arranging a vast body of hagiographical material, not much different from presenting it in alphabetical or some other systematic order, as is the case with the Sayings of the Desert Fathers. The distinction between men and women and the isolation of women as a group may thus have been applied simply as an organizational principle. Two texts may suffice to illustrate this: In the description of the sights of Constantinople in the eighth-century *Parastaseis*, the statues of women are listed as a separate group;¹¹³ and the twelfth-century author Theophanes of Cerami, in his homily on the centurion's son, illustrates God's benefactions to humankind with pairs of miracles that juxtapose stories about men and about women.¹¹⁴ This kind of arrangement of textual material according to gender is also used in manuscripts. The seventh hagiographical manuscript to be considered here—Athens, Ethnike Bibliotheke, cod. 513—contains in its first part extracts from Lives of holy men and in the second part extracts from Lives of holy women.¹¹⁵ A comparable arrangement is also found in two

¹¹² *Vita* of Elisabeth of Heracleia, in Halkin, "Sainte Élisabeth," 257–58. The convent founded in Constantinople by Olympias soon attracts a loyal following among her extended family: "Vita sanctae Olympiadis et narratio Sergiae," p. 414, lines 12–19. Melania the Younger in her seclusion on the Mount of Olives allows regular access only to her mother, her husband, and her niece: *vita* of Melania the Younger by Symeon Metaphrastes, PG 116, col. 777A; the niece is singled out again in the account of Melania's death: *ibid.*, cols. 789D and 793A. And Theodora of Thessalonike lives in the same convent as her daughter: *vita* of Theodora of Thessalonike by Staurakios, in Kurtz, "Theodora von Thessalonich," p. 58, lines 11–p. 59, line 13 (this is the version of the *vita* contained in our Florence manuscript). On this subject, see also A. Laiou, "Observations on the Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women," *ByzF* 9 (1985), 59–102, esp. 75–76, and A.-M. Talbot, "The Byzantine Family and the Monastery," *DOP* 44 (1990), 121–23.

¹¹³ *Parastaseis*, chaps. 29–36, in *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The "Parastaseis sytomoï chronikai"* introd., trans., and comm. A. Cameron and J. Herrin (Leiden, 1984), 92–97.

¹¹⁴ Theophanes of Cerami, Hom. 44, *De centurione*, PG 132, cols. 825–836, cols. 828C–829B.

¹¹⁵ I. Sakkellion, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἑθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος* (Athens, 1892), 101; F. Halkin, *Catalogue des manuscrits hagiographiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale d'Athènes*, SubsHag 66 (Brussels, 1983), 61–63, dating it to the 14th–15th century. See also, B. Flusin and J. Paramelle, "De Syncletica in deserto Iordanis (BHG 1318w)," *AB* 100 (1982), 291–94, assigning it a date in the late 13th–early 14th century. The last part has been edited by B. Paschos, *Νέον μητερικόν. Ἀγνωστα καὶ ἀνέκδοτα πατερικὰ καὶ ἀσκητικὰ κείμενα περὶ τιμίῶν καὶ ἁγίων γυναικῶν* (Athens, 1990).

Georgian manuscripts containing translations of Greek hagiographical texts, where the first part on male saints is followed by a second part on female saints.¹¹⁶

A similar observation can be made in Byzantine art. The standard iconography of the Last Judgment shows the Saved arranged in several groups, distinguishing between the male saints or monks, the male martyrs, and the saintly women. The most splendid examples are the eleventh-century mosaics in Torcello¹¹⁷ and the early-fourteenth-century frescoes in the Chora monastery (Kariye Djami) in Constantinople.¹¹⁸ Similarly, in the decorative program of the Byzantine cross-in-square church that was developed in the ninth century, women saints were often grouped together and depicted, along with the holy emperors, in the narthex of the church.¹¹⁹ However, in one instance at least, Byzantine art demonstrates the demand for gender-specific representations: When the Constantinopolitan nunnery of Theotokos Maroulis was converted into a monastery in the fourteenth century, the depictions of female saints on its walls were washed off and replaced with those of male saints.¹²⁰

Like television producers today, the Byzantine hagiographers aimed to fine tune their product to the expectations of their market—or what they perceived as such. In doing so, they exhibit a certain oscillation between the factual and the normative. On the one hand, they were well aware of the nature of their audience—hence the presentation of holy women as being of universal interest. But as authors of edifying works addressed to women, Byzantine men tended to impose their own judgment in anticipating the interests of their audience, a judgment that is called into question when women authors or patronesses took the initiative. Modern students of the subject can and must avoid the same pitfall.

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¹¹⁶P. Peeters, "De codice Hiberico Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxoniensis," *AB* 31 (1912), 301–18; and the manuscript of translations of pre-metaphrastic texts mentioned above, note 29.

¹¹⁷R. Polacco, *La cattedrale di Torcello* (Venice, 1984), pl. 68.

¹¹⁸P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), I, 203, with plates in III, 368, 370, 384.

¹¹⁹O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1976), 26.

¹²⁰J. Kalekas, *Synodi decretum de quodam monasterio monialium*, PG 152, cols. 1256–1260, esp. col. 1258A, and MM 1:222; cf. A.-M. Talbot, "A Comparison of the Monastic Experiences of Byzantine Men and Women," *GOTR* 30 (1985), 7–8 (repr. in *Byzantine Saints and Monasteries*, ed. N. M. Vaporis [Brookline, Mass., 1985]).

Appendix 1

Synoptic Table of the Contents of the Materika Manuscripts

The following table offers a synopsis of the range of texts covered by the six manuscripts under study here. It is arranged in the order of the calendar, beginning with September. The second and third columns indicate the texts contained in the two main sources—the *menologium* of Symeon Metaphrastes and the Imperial Menologium. Columns four through nine refer to the six manuscripts, noting for each text the number indicating the place where it appears in the manuscript and the source from which it is derived or its author. Also indicated, either in the sources columns or in the manuscript column, is the number assigned to the text in F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd ed., SubsHag 8a (Brussels, 1957), and idem, *Novum auctarium bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae*, SubsHag 65 (Brussels, 1984), where further reference to the printed editions can be found.

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Sep. 10	Menodora, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 1273		Text 35 SM	Text 1 SM				Text 1 SM
Sep. 11	Theodora of Alexandria, <i>disguised as a eunuch</i> , 5th cent., 1730		Text 1 SM	Text 2 SM		Text 5 1727 (= Pre-SM)	Text 1 SM, fragment, (no date)	Text 2 SM (no date)
Sep. 16 (cf. Jul. 11)	Euphemia, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 620		Text 2 SM	Text 3 SM				Text 3 SM
Sep. 17	Sophia, <i>martyr</i> , 2nd cent., 1638		Text 36 SM	Text 4 SM				
Sep. 24	Thecla, <i>martyr</i> , 1st cent., 1719		Text 3 SM	Text 5 SM				Text 4 SM (no date)
Sep. 25	Euphrosyne of Alexandria, <i>disguised as a eunuch</i> , 5th cent., 626		Text 4 SM	Text 6 SM			Text 2 SM, fragment (no date)	
Sep. 29	Cyriacus, <i>hermit</i> , 5th–6th cent., 464						Text 3 SM, fragment, Maria (= 1041z?)	
Sep. 30	Gregory the Illuminator, <i>apostle to the Armenians</i> , 3rd–4th cent., 713						Text 4 SM, fragment, Rhipsima and Gaiana, 713e	
Oct. 2	Cyprianus and Iustina, <i>martyrs</i> , 4th cent., 456						Text 5 SM	
Oct. 2							Text 6 Cyprianus and Iustina, <i>martyrs</i> , 4th cent., by Gregory Nazianzen, fragment, 457a	

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumusiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Göteborg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Oct. 4							Text 7 Bernica and Prosdoka, <i>martyrs</i> , <i>4th cent.</i> , by John Chrysostom, 274	
Oct. 4	Charitine, <i>martyr</i> , <i>4th cent.</i> , 300		Text 37 SM (Oct. 5)	Text 7 SM			Text 8 SM (Oct. 5)	
Oct. 8	Pelagia, <i>penitent</i> , <i>disguised as a</i> <i>eunuch</i> , <i>5th cent.</i> ? 1479		Text 5 SM	Text 8 SM (no date)			Text 9 SM	
Oct. 8							Text 10 Pelagia, by John Chrysostom, 1477	
Oct. 14					Text 1 Paraskeue the Younger, <i>hermit, nun in</i> <i>Constantinople</i> , <i>10th cent.</i> , 1420z		Text 11 Paraskeue the Younger, 1420z	
Oct. 24	Arethas, <i>martyr</i> , <i>6th cent.</i> , 167						Text 12 SM, fragment, women martyrs, 167a	
Oct. 29	Abramius, <i>hermit</i> , <i>4th cent.</i> , 8						Text 13 SM, fragment, Maria, niece of Abramius, 8a	
Oct. 29	Anastasia Romana, <i>martyr</i> , <i>4th cent.</i> , 77		Text 38 SM	Text 14 SM (no date)			Text 14 SM	

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumsiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Nov. 8					Text 2 Euphrosyne, <i>disguised as a eunuch, later a nun in Constantinople, 9th–10th cent.</i> , by Nicephorus Kallistos Xanthopoulos, 627		Text 15 Euphrosyne, by Nicephorus Kallistos Xanthopoulos, 627 (no date)	
Nov. 9	Matrona, <i>disguised as a eunuch, later an abbess in Constantinople, 5th cent.</i> , 1222		Text 6 SM				Text 16 SM	
Nov. 10	Theoktiste, <i>hermit, 9th cent.</i> , 1726						Text 17 SM	
Nov. 12	John the Almsgiver, <i>patriarch of Alexandria, 7th cent.</i> , 888						Text 18 SM, fragment, woman sinner, 888d	
Nov. 24	Catherine of Alexandria, <i>martyr, 4th cent.</i> , 32		Text 7 SM (Nov. 25)	Text 9 SM (no date)		Text 3 SM	Text 19 SM	
Nov. 28	Stephen Jr., <i>martyr, 8th cent.</i> , 1667			Text 10 SM (no date)			Text 20 SM, fragment, the widow Anna, 1667a	
Dec. 4	Barbara, <i>martyr, 4th cent.</i> , 216		Text 8 SM				Text 21 SM	
Dec. 15					Text 19 Drosis, <i>martyr</i> , by John Chrysostom, 566 (no date)			
Dec. 16					Text 3 Theophano, <i>empress, 9th cent.</i> , 1794		Text 22 Theophano, 1794	

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumusiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Dec. 21	Juliane, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 963		Text 9 SM				Text 23 SM	Text 5 SM
Dec. 22	Anastasia (and Agape, Irene, Chione), <i>martyrs</i> , 4th cent., 82		Text 10 SM	Text 11 SM			Text 24 SM	Text 6 SM
Dec. 24	Eugenia, <i>disguised as a eunuch</i> , <i>martyr</i> , 2nd–3rd cent., 608		Text 11 SM	Text 12 SM			Text 25 SM	Text 7 SM
Dec. 28	Indus and Domna, <i>martyrs</i> , 4th cent., 823						Text 26 SM, fragment, 823a	
Dec. 31	Melania the Younger, <i>abbess</i> , 5th cent., 1242		Text 12 SM	Text 13 SM			Text 27 SM	
Jan. 1					Text 4 Thomaïs of Lesbos, <i>abbess in Constantinople</i> , 10th cent., 2454		Text 28 Thomaïs of Lesbos, 2454	
Jan. 4					Text 5 Syncletica, <i>hermit</i> , 4th cent., 1694 (Jan. 3)		Text 29 Syncletica, 1694	
Jan. 8					Text 6 Domnica, <i>hermit</i> , 4th–5th cent., 562		Text 30 Domnica, 562	
Jan. 12					Text 7 Tatiana, <i>martyr</i> , 2nd cent., 1699b		Text 31 Tatiana, 1699b	

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Jan. 24	Eusebia, <i>5th cent.</i> , 634		Text 13 SM	Text 15 SM			Text 32 SM	
Feb. 8, 12						Text 4 Eugenius and Maria, 615 (?)		
Feb. 11							Text 33 Theodora, <i>empress</i> , <i>d. 867</i> , fragments, 1734a (Sunday of Orthodoxy)	
Feb. 23					Text 8 Gorgonia, <i>sister of Gregory of Nazianzen</i> , <i>d. ca. 370</i> , by Gregory, 704 (no date)		Text 34 Gorgonia, by Gregory of Nazianzen, 704	
Feb. 26 (cf. Aug. 20)			Text 14 Photina, <i>martyr</i> , <i>1st cent.</i> , 1541a					
Apr. 1	Mary of Egypt, <i>hermit</i> , by Sophronius, 1042		Text 15 SM					
Apr. 5					Text 9 Theodora of Thessalonike, <i>nun, 9th cent.</i> , by John Staurakios, 1740			
Apr. 24					Text 10 Elisabeth of Heracleia, <i>hermit</i> , 2121			
May 5			Text 16 Irene, <i>martyr</i> , 952y					

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumusiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
May 29			Text 18 Theodosia, <i>martyr</i> , by John Staurakios, 1774a	Text 16 Theodosia, by Constantine Acropolites, 1774				
Jun. 13		Aquilina, <i>martyr</i> , 3rd cent., 163e	Text 19 ImpM					
Jun. 23		Agrippina, <i>martyr</i> , 3rd cent., 2018	Text 20 ImpM					
Jun. 25		Febronia, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 659e	Text 17 Febronia, 659		Text 11 Febronia, 659			
Jul. 2		Invention and deposition of the robe of the Virgin, 1058e	Text 21 ImpM					
Jul. 7			Text 22 Cyriaca, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 462e					
Jul. 11 (cf. Sep. 16)			Text 23 Euphemia, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., by Theodore Bestos, 624					
Jul. 13		Golindouch, <i>martyr</i> , 6th cent., 702b	Text 24 ImpM					
Jul. 14		Myrope, <i>martyr</i> , 3rd cent., 2282	Text 28 ImpM (no date)					
Jul. 15		Cirycus and Iulitta, <i>martys</i> , 4th cent., 318e	Text 25 Cirycus and Iulitta by Nicetas Rhetor, 318					

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumiou 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Göteborg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Jul. 17		Marina, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 1168e	Text 26 Marina, 1168					
Jul. 19					Text 12 Macrina, <i>sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa</i> , d. 379, by Gregory, 1012			
Jul. 22		Mary Magdalene, 1161z	Text 27 Mary Magdalene, 1161x		Text 13 Mary Magdalene, by Nikephoros Kallistos, 1162			
Jul. 24		Christina, <i>martyr</i> , 302a	Text 29 ImpM					
Jul. 24, 25, 26					Text 15 Olympias, <i>abbess in Constantinople</i> , 5th cent., 1375 (no date)			
Jul. 25		Eupraxia, 5th cent., 631e	Text 30 Eupraxia, by Ignatios (from 631b?)		Text 14 Eupraxia, 631b (Jul. 24)	Text 2 Eupraxia, 631b		
Jul. 26			Text 31 Paraskeue the Elder, <i>martyr</i> , 1420d					
Jul. 26					Text 16 Horiaiozele, <i>martyr</i> , 1st cent., by Constantine Acropolites, 2180 (no date)			
Jul. 28					Text 17 Irene of Chrysobalanton, <i>abbess in Constantinople</i> , 9th–10th cent., 952 (no date) Text 17		Text 1 Irene of Chrysobalanton, 952	

Date	Sources		Manuscripts					
	Symeon Metaphrastes (= SM)	Imperial Menologium (= ImpM)	Dionysiou 166	Kutlumusiu 208	Florence, Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214	University of Michigan 50 (lacks dates and calendrical order)	Gothenburg gr. 4	Vatican, Pian. 36
Aug. 3, 4, 5					Ia, <i>martyr</i> , 7th cent., 762 (no date)			
Aug. 15	Dormition of the Virgin, 1047	Dormition of the Virgin, 1047–48	Text 32 ImpM	Text 18 fragment				
Aug. 20 (cf. Feb. 26)					Text 18 Photina, <i>martyr</i> , 1st cent., 1541 and 1541m (no date)			
Aug. 21		Bassa, <i>martyr</i> , 4th cent., 270b	Text 33 ImpM					
Aug. 24		Anthusa, <i>martyr</i> , 3rd cent., 137a	Text 34 ImpM					

Appendix 2

Some Observations about Translations into the Vernacular and the Production of Manuscripts on Mount Athos in the Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

The most intriguing manuscript in our group is without question codex Dionysiou 166. It is also the manuscript that gives the most detailed information about the circumstances of its production. According to a notice on folio 3v, it was copied in 1616 by the monk Kyrillos at the expense of Gerasimos, the *nosokomos* (head of the hospital) of the Dionysiou monastery. The most interesting text it contains is the translation by the monk Ignatios of the martyrdom of Eupraxia into the contemporary *koine*. Donor, scribe, and translator of this codex are also attested in conjunction with other manuscripts of the Dionysiou monastery. A Gerasimos, *monachos* of Dionysiou, paid for a seventeenth-century manuscript, copied by a certain Daniel, containing hagiographical and other edifying texts (cod. 132).¹ Perhaps this same Gerasimos later became the *nosokomos* of his monastery.

The dated manuscripts in Dionysiou from the hand of the scribe Kyrillos span the years from 1593 to 1631.² He may well be the Kyrillos “the sinner [and] monk” who copied six manuscripts of another Athos monastery, Simopetra, in the late 1580s³ and who, according to his own statement, became a monk there in 1589.⁴ At around the same time, several other manuscripts in the library of yet a third Athos monastery, the Great Laura, were copied by a “Kyrillos monachos,” who may be identical with our scribe.⁵ If our assumptions are correct, this would mean that Kyrillos was based in Simopetra and worked as a scribe on commission for other individuals or monastic institutions,⁶ thus adding an interesting detail to our knowledge of the technicalities of manuscript production on the Holy Mountain.

¹For further information on the manuscripts cited in the following, see the relevant descriptions in Sp. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, I (Cambridge, 1895), and S. Eustratiades, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Laura on Mount Athos*, Harvard Theological Studies 12 (Cambridge, Mass., 1925).

²Dionysiou, codd. 134, 137, 215, 424, 434, 524.

³Simopetra, codd. 46, 105, 110, 114, 129, 130.

⁴Simopetra, cod. 110, Lambros, *Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, 125.

⁵Laura, codd. Γ 79 (1600), Ε 88 (1619), Θ 137 (1601), Ι 22 (1602), Ι 23 (1618), Ι 133 (1606), Λ 50 (1588 or 1589), Ω 83 (1612). To attribute cod. Η 102, dated 1561, to the same Kyrillos would mean to accord him an unlikely seven decades in the scribal profession. It is interesting to note that Kyrillos identifies himself in the Laura manuscripts in rather vague terms, as a monk “of Mount Athos.” The fruits of his labor, however, were on occasion sold by the Laura (Λ 50) while others were destined to remain in the monastery (Γ 79, Θ 137).

⁶This would explain the manuscripts from his pen in Therapnais, monastery of the Forty Martyrs, cod. 51.46 and cod. 60.49; Pantokrator, cod. 147; and Iviron, cod. 17. A Κύριλλος μοναχός is also the scribe of four dated manuscripts in Vatopedi, codd. 1112 (1549), 1139 (1564), 1123 (1593), and 150 (1597): cf. S. Eustratiades, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mt. Athos*, Harvard

Ignatios, the translator of the *Vita Eupraxiae*, is attested as a scribe among the Dionysiou manuscripts from 1602 to 1630.⁷ He hailed from Chios,⁸ and must have paid a visit to the island in 1619, on which occasion he copied cod. Dionys. 150.⁹ The latest dated manuscript from his hand, of 1630, is the official copy of a historical document from the year 1400.¹⁰ Parallel to his work as a scribe, Ignatios was also active as a translator. Four different texts are attributed to him among the manuscripts on Mount Athos: the Life of Eupraxia, the martyrdom of Panteleemon, the Catechesis of Theodore the Studite, and the homily of Gregory Palamas on the paralytic. He also produced a compilation of liturgical texts.

The first attestation of Ignatios' translation of the Life of Eupraxia comes from an autograph segment in cod. Dionys. 151, of the year 1610, where (according to the identification by Lambros) he appears as both the translator into the Greek vernacular and the scribe of this Life and of a second text, the martyrdom of Panteleemon.¹¹ However, this is not the earliest evidence for Ignatios' translation activity. A manuscript dated 1602—Laura, cod. I 131—already contains his rendition of the martyrdom of Panteleemon. Obviously, his versions enjoyed immediate popularity within his monastery and beyond. His *Vita Eupraxiae* is found in three seventeenth-century codices of unspecified date—Dionys. 160, Dionys. 223, Dionys. 294—in addition to the manuscript here—Dionys. 166, of 1616—which was probably copied from Ignatios' autograph in Dionys. 151. The Life of Eupraxia in Ignatios' translation appears also in Laura, cod. Ω 90 (dated 1642) and cod. Θ 222,¹² as well as in two eighteenth-century manuscripts, Vatopedi, cod. 453, and Iviron, cod. 5. The martyrdom of Panteleemon occurs in the seventeenth-century cod. Dionys. 230. Both hagiographical works are preserved together in cod. Dionys. 162 (seventeenth century) and Dionys. 299 (dated 1623), as well as in the seventeenth-century cod. Vatop. 212 and two manuscripts in Laura, cod. I 58¹³ and cod. Α 26 (eighteenth century). It is possible that the success of Ignatios' hagiographical translations prompted the abbot Dionysios Metrophanes to commission him for the translation of the Catechesis of Theodore the Studite, a core text for Byzantine monasticism. The autograph of this translation survives in cod. Dionys. 254 of 1618. Six years later, in 1624, Ignatios is recorded as the compiler of a collection of liturgical texts, which now survives in a copy in Iviron, cod. 26, made in 1878.¹⁴ Finally, Ignatios translated into the vernacular the homily of Gregory Palamas on the paralytic in Capernaum, which is found in Laura, cod. I 105, dated 1640.¹⁵

Theological Studies 11 (Cambridge, Mass., 1924; repr. New York, 1969). Again, the date of the first two codices does not fit the time frame established here. Ultimately, the issue can only be settled by a palaeographical comparison of all the manuscripts in question. On Kyrillos, see also M. Vogel and V. Gardthausen, *Die griechischen Schreiber des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1909), 240.

⁷Dionysiou, codd. 127, 150, 500, 505, 539, 547.

⁸Dionysiou, cod. 230. This is confirmed by Vatopedi, cod. 453, which contains the *vita* of Eupraxia in the translation by Ignatios ιερομοναχού του Χίου.

⁹Perhaps his visit had begun already in the previous year, 1618, when he corrected Dionys. 228, which had been copied in Chios in 1421. He may then have brought this manuscript with him on his return to Dionysiou.

¹⁰N. Oikonomidès, *Actes de Dionysiou* (Paris, 1968), I, 14, n. 48.

¹¹Entry at the end of the *martyrium* of Panteleemon: Οἱ παρόντες δύο βίοι ἐγράφησαν παρ' ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἐν ιερομονάχοις ἐλαχίστου [Ἰγνατίου] καὶ μετεβλήθησαν εἰς κοινὴν φράσιν εἰς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων. Cf. Lambros, *Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, 347.

¹²Eustratiades' 15th-century date for this manuscript (*Laura*, 169) is called into question by the presence of this 17th-century text.

¹³Again, Eustratiades erroneously places this manuscript in the 15th century (*Laura*, 188).

¹⁴Eustratiades, *Laura*, 388: συγγράφην μὲν τὸ πρῶτον παρά τινος ιερομοναχου Ἰγνατίου ἐν ἔτει 1624 μηνὶ Ἰανουαρίῳ διὰ τὴν τοῦ Διονυσίου ἱερὰν μονὴν . . .

¹⁵Eustratiades, *Laura*, 198: μεταφράσθη δὲ εἰς τὸ ἀπολούστερον παρὰ τοῦ λογιωτάτου ἐν πνευματικοῖς κυροῦ Ἰγνατίου μονῆς τοῦ κυροῦ Διονυσίου.